

III. REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claim 1 and 4 have been amended, and claims 10-31 have been canceled. As a result, claims 1-9 remain pending in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Office, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Office. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserves the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-8, 11-19 and 21-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,910,018), hereafter “Okada.” Claims 9, 20 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Okada.

A. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-8, 10-19 AND 21-31 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection over Okada, Applicants assert that Okada does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention. For example, with respect to claim 1, Applicants continue to submit that Okada fails to teach logging an approver into an application used to make item requests. The passages of Okada cited by the Office describe personal information and using the personal information for logging into its authorization system. However, Okada does not teach that its authorization system is the same system that is used to

make item requests. In contrast, Okada, teaches that the procurement is provided by "...another system [from the authorization] used to actually order the articles to external suppliers." Col. 5, lines 2-7. To this extent, the authorization of Okada is not done in the same system as the procurement, but rather is done in a separate system.

In contrast, the claimed invention includes "...logging an approver into an application used to make item requests." Claim 1. As such, the logging / displaying of the claimed invention is not performed by separate applications as are the functions of Okada, but rather are performed by the application used to make the item requests. Thus, the separate systems of Okada do not teach or suggest the unified application of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

With further respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Okada also fails to teach that the receiving is adapted to receive a plurality of approval determinations from the approver simultaneously. The Office states that, as previously worded, the limitation is met by Okada because several unrelated approvers could accidentally approve things simultaneously. However, with respect to a single approver, Okada only teaches allowing a single purchase request to be approved at any one time. The claimed invention, in contrast, includes an ability to receive a plurality of approval determinations from the approver simultaneously. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With still further respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Okada also fails to teach displaying a view containing a set of item requests to the approver containing all item requests for which approval is requested from the approver, the set of item requests including a plurality of item requests from a plurality of requesters. In contrast, as stated

above, Okada only displays a single item and not all item request for which approval is requested and does not include a plurality of requests from a plurality of requesters. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With respect to newly amended dependent claim 4, Applicants respectfully submit that Okada also fails to teach automatically determining the approver and a subsequent approver based on an item in the item request. In contrast, any association, if any, in Okada is made based on the requester and not on the item being requested. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

With respect to the Office's other arguments regarding dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to the independent claims from which the claims depend. Furthermore, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. Since the cited art does not teach each and every feature of the claimed invention, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

B. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 9 AND 20 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With regard to the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection of claims 9 and 20 over Okada, Applicants respectfully assert that the Office's unsubstantiated factual statement constitutes Official Notice, Applicants further assert that the Office's factual assertion is not properly based upon common knowledge. For example, Applicants asserts that an approver list that identifies approvers that have approved the at least one item request, and approvers that have yet to approve the at least one item request is not obvious to one skilled in the art as asserted by the Office. Accordingly,

Applicants respectfully request that the Office support the finding with references that show these features.

With regard to the Office's other arguments regarding dependent claims, Applicants herein incorporate the arguments presented above with respect to independent claims listed above. In addition, Applicants submit that all dependant claims are allowable based on their own distinct features. However, for brevity, Applicants will forego addressing each of these rejections individually, but reserves the right to do so should it become necessary. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw its rejection.

VI. CONCLUSION

In addition to the above arguments, Applicants submit that each of the pending claims is patentable for one or more additional unique features. To this extent, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's interpretation of the claimed subject matter or the references used in rejecting the claimed subject matter. Additionally, Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office's combinations and modifications of the various references or the motives cited for such combinations and modifications. These features and the appropriateness of the Office's combinations and modifications have not been separately addressed herein for brevity. However, Applicants reserve the right to present such arguments in a later response should one be necessary.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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